

## TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH - ORTONVILLE, MINNESOTA

### -- HISTORY 1896 / 2021 --

#### GENESIS 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning we speak, sometimes, of the birth of a nation, of an idea, of a song — hence, the birth of a congregation. In this sense "birth" refers to the start of something — its origin, its source. When we think, say, or do things that are in tune with the Spirit of God, how did that get started? Jesus says it started with our spiritual birth. The Spirit gave us faith. Once we were born of the Spirit, our life took on a spiritual thrust. God became the center of our lives. We began to depend on Him for help and to thank Him for our blessings. How important it is that we remember the roots from which God brought us.

The earliest account of a missionary to the white settlers appears to be the visit of a young Evangelical preacher, A.C. Schmidt. He came from Redwood Falls in 1870 and held a communion service in the Odessa area on June 23, 1871.

The well-known young German Lutheran Pastor, Frederick Pfothenauer, traveled by horse and buggy or sled to visit and conduct services in a wide area of western Minnesota and eastern South Dakota. (He later became president of the Minnesota-Dakota District and the entire Missouri Synod from 1911-1935.)

In the year 1870 it was a custom of large congregations of the Missouri Synod to call missionaries as assistant pastors, enabling them to work the extensive surrounding mission territory more easily from a central point. At that time the Rev. W. Friedrich, pastor at Waconia, Minnesota, had charge of the mission interests of the Northwest. To assist him, his congregation called Candidate H. Vetter from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. He was ordained as pastor and missionary in July, 1872, and placed in charge of the central part of the State of Minnesota.

Pastor Vetter carried on his mission work systematically, dividing his territory into three circuits — St. Cloud, Sauk Centre and Dakota — and served these to the best of his ability. In these large circuits, he organized congregations and preaching stations from which his ministry could be directed into surrounding territories. One of these stations was in Fairfield Township, Swift County, where the Rev. Vetter served until February 1888.

Thus, Lutheranism in the Appleton Circuit was "born" and began to grow by leaps and bounds. Fourteen congregations are evidence of this movement.

On November 8, 1896, God breathed life into the German Evangelical Church Society when a group of German families decided they wanted to praise God together. **The signatures to the right are believed to be the eight charter members.**

A church society was a very common name in the beginning of the organizing of a future congregation. A "society" is a group of people with a common belief, language, and heritage.

Rev. August Bartling from Trinity, Odessa, began serving as a vacancy pastor until 1903. Services were held in the homes in the Ortonville and Big Stone areas and then in the Swedish

Lutheran Church in the City of Ortonville. (Located at 224 5th St. N. West, it has since been converted into apartment housing.) On March 1, 1903, the first annual meeting recorded was held with Wilhelm Krueger being elected chairman and Albin Wihlborg elected secretary. Elected trustees were A. Grosenick for a three year term; A. Wihlborg, two year term; and W. Krueger for one year. The first order of business was to have the congregation incorporated. On March 28, 1903 at 9:00 A.M, the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church Society of Ortonville, Minnesota was duly recorded.

In 1903, the Rev. George Kase became the pastor and served the Ortonville Society through 1906. It was in the Swedish Lutheran Church in Ortonville that Rev. Kase was ordained into the sacred ministry on August 24, 1902, by Pastor August Bartling of Odessa, Minnesota. Rev. Kase lived in Ortonville in 1903 and moved to Milbank in 1904

*Underschrift.*

*Platzir.*  
8. Nov. 1896.

*Therese Thirvald*

*Perdinanda Casper*

*Emil Frank*

*Emma Dubler*

*K. H. Schumacher*

*Albin Wihlborg*

*Wilhelm Krueger*

*A. H. Grosenick*



after the Milbank congregation completed their parsonage. Pastor Kase served in Milbank, Ortonville, Clinton and Zion Lutheran Church in Geneseo Township located nine miles north of Milbank, South Dakota. Starting in January, 1907, he devoted his full time to serving the Milbank and Zion congregations.

In 1905, pledges were received for the purpose of a church building. Pledges from ten members were accepted with amounts varying from \$40 to \$200. Wm. Tippermann, Wm. Krueger and Fred Bachman were appointed to select fitting property. On April 28, 1905, it was acknowledged that the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church Society of Ortonville purchased Lots (1), Block (2), Park Addition (and other lands) for the sum of \$150 from M. Stephens and C.C. Carl. (This is the lot where the church now stands.) Wm. Tippermann would be the builder for the new church and the congregation would furnish the materials.

Rev. George Kase served until December 2, 1906, when he was granted a peaceful release. Once again Rev. Bartling became vacancy pastor with a starting yearly salary of \$100 and with the understanding that if more funds were collected, the salary would increase to \$125. It is interesting to note that in October of 1911, Pastor Bartling had finished serving the Odessa congregation; but the congregation did not want to give him a peaceful release for these reasons:

1. In June, Odessa truly is one-third larger than Ortonville;
2. That the school instructions were urgently needed at Odessa;
3. The pastor's work in their midst is blessed.

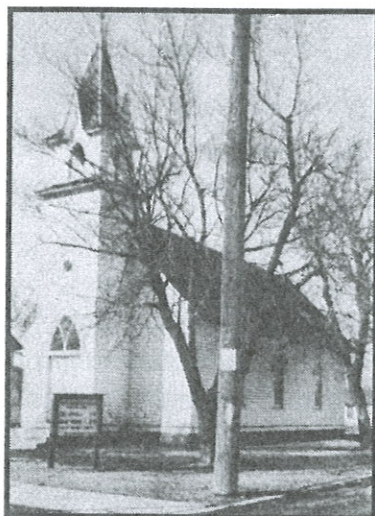
On January 8, 1911, it was decided to build a parsonage. A building committee of Wm. Tippermann, August Grosenick and Carl Hograush was appointed and were instructed to bring back information in four weeks.

On Christmas Day, 1911, some members informed the congregation of their desire to own their own church building. It was reported that for \$300 a church with the dimensions of 26x48 feet, built in 1906, could be bought along with 18 pews.

For the sum of \$1.00, the congregation purchased the "Hurley Church Building" from O.D. Hurley of San Diego County, California, on February 6, 1912.

An article in the Herald Star dated March 21, 1912, read "Church Comes To Town" — "Members of the German Lutheran Congregation

*have purchased the Hurley Church building, which was up the lake a few miles and had the building moved to this city. The building was moved onto the ice and brought down the lake and now is at the foot of Madison Avenue, but will soon be moved onto lots near the parsonage, where it will be remodeled into a modern place of worship. Mr. J.J. Hausauer and some other men from the community moved the Union Church from what was known as the Hurley farm. This was accomplished by the use of seven teams of horses on the ice of Big Stone Lake."*



**The Original Church Building**



**The First Parsonage - 1911**

July 28, 1912, renovation of the new church was completed, "so that on that designated day, the festive dedication could take place. That was a big day, we had beautiful weather, festive service and confessional." Our speaker was A. L. Oetjen. "We held three church services at 10:00 A.M., 2:30 P.M. and in the evening . . . a divine service."

On March 17, 1912, St. John's Church of Alban Township, South Dakota, and the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church Society held a joint meeting concerning if the two congregations should unite and call a shared pastor. The meeting was unanimous and Pastor Bartling was given the call. On April 7, 1912, Pastor Bartling informed us that he accepted the call. Our first independent pastor of the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church was installed on April 29, 1912.

Up until 1920, all church services were in the German language; however, students were required to take confirmation classes in English as well as the German language. By 1920, younger members were complaining about the German services and would like to have some services in English. To please these members, it was decided to have one English service every three weeks. They were required to bring



their own song books of our country in the English language.

Pastor Bartling, at a joint meeting of Trinity, Ortonville, and St. John's on August 26, 1929, submitted his resignation as our pastor because of stomach problems, age and other reasons. He could not continue his work as much as he would like to. As of September 15, it would be 45 years he had served in the ministry and he would like to retire, so the congregations gave him a peaceful release. Pastor Bartling continued being a member and served many more years as secretary of the voter's meetings.

In November of 1929, a call was sent to Rev. William Hartman at Holy Cross Church in St. Cloud. Early in the year of 1930, Rev. Hartman began serving as our pastor. He served and watched over the congregation during the difficult years of the great depression and most of World War II.

A very unique celebration occurred whereby Pastor and Mrs. Bartling celebrated their golden wedding anniversary and Pastor and Mrs. Hartman celebrated their silver anniversary together, both from the same congregation. After serving the Lord for 37 years, Pastor Hartman made the decision to retire. His ministry duties as pastor ended in September of 1945. He and his wife moved to South Gate, California. The congregation's pastoral vacancy was filled by Pastor Koch. He served as a vacancy pastor until Rev. Ray Holzhauer of Dickinson, North Dakota, answered our call to be shepherd of our congregation.

In 1931, all minutes of the voter's meetings were to be written in English; up until this time, they were recorded in High German. Also since 1921, more English services were gradually added with less German services being held.

It is interesting, that as of 1944 women and children sat on the lectern side of the church and men would sit on the pulpit side. By now many congregations had given up this practice so it is not known when exactly this separation ended, but it was not going on by 1946.

Members of the congregation, in 1946, realized that we were outgrowing our present church building. It was wonderfully great to see that so many people and families wanted to hear God's Word; but what to do. A building committee was appointed consisting of Robert Berwald, Arthur Delgehausen, M.J. Hausauer, Raymond Hausauer, Weston Schneck, Gerhardt Schwandt, John Witte, and E.T. Zemple. They met with Mr. Hasslen of Hasslen and Son Construction Company for suggestions for a new church building. A goal of \$50,000 was set to be raised for the construction of a new building.

The Rev. Ray Holzhauer was installed to start his ministerial duties in July of 1946. Our congregational constitution was being revised at this time and the final draft of the constitution was approved by the Voter's Assembly in January 1947. One major change that was made was its name. From this time forward, the German Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church Society will be known as "Trinity Lutheran Church" of Ortonville, Minnesota. It is interesting to note that we also joined the Missouri Synod in this year.

At a special meeting held in March, a Mr. Schmidt of Mankato, Minnesota, was the architect hired to draw up plans for a new church building. By January of 1948, plans were presented and after some minor changes the plans were approved.

Our congregation still continued to grow, so in January we put out a call to Rev. Holzhauer to be our full time pastor. Rev. Holzhauer accepted our call in March of 1948, thus, we separated ourselves from St. John's congregation which we had been affiliated with since 1912.



Construction was begun on the building with the first breaking of ground on October 5, 1948. The basement was completed by the time cold weather appeared. Construction was resumed on March 17, 1949 — this time on the upper structure.

The original church was sold to the Methodist congregation and moved to Wilmot, South Dakota, where it is still being used today. During the construction period, church services were held in the Ortonville High School. In later years when construction on the school was being done, the church basement was used for classrooms by the school.



The cornerstone was laid with special ceremonies on April 24, 1949, and the work was completed with the dedication being held on Sunday, September 11, 1949. Construction cost totaled \$100,000 plus 10 percent for the contractor for a grand total of \$110,000. Congregational members served the Lord by doing as much work that they could do themselves, thus lowering the construction costs.

Items placed in the cornerstone are: The Holy Bible; copy of constitution and by-laws of the congregation; history of the congregation; catechism; names of church officers of 1949, pastor and building committee, contractor, architect; The Minnesota Lutheran and Lutheran Witness publications; the names of the President of the United States, Governor of Minnesota, and the Mayor of Ortonville; and copies of the local newspaper.

Columbia Granite Works of Ortonville donated the cornerstone. (Steiner-Rausch Prop.)



The members of the congregation of the Trinity Lutheran Church of Ortonville gathered at the site of their new church edifice, now under construction, to participate in the cornerstone laying service last Sunday morning. The regular Sunday service was held at the high school auditorium at 10:30 a.m., and church members then gathered at the new church for the laying of the cornerstone. The Rev. Ray G. Holzhauser is shown as he officiated at the dedication.

Photo by Vikre

The  
congregation  
at the  
cornerstone  
laying . . .





**Early summer of 1949  
following service by  
Pastor Holzhauser.**

Worshippers and well-wishers filled the church to more than twice its stated capacity of 365 for both the morning and afternoon dedication ceremonies. An estimated 600 people attended the morning service, while more than 800 attended the service in the afternoon.

A special ceremony began at the entrance of the edifice with the pastor offering a prayer to God the Father followed by more prayers. The church doors were unlocked and a processional beginning with:

1. The ministers, bearing the Bibles, the Liturgy and the Hymn Book.
2. The Architect, Builder, and Building Committee.
3. The Church Council.
4. The Choir.
5. The Congregation and the Guests.

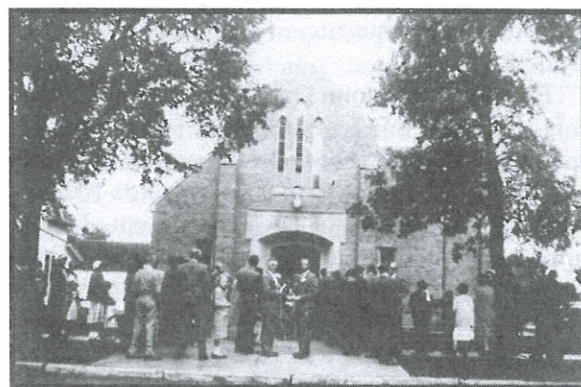
The Rev. H. A. Gamber, president of the Minnesota District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, delivered the message at the morning service at 10:30. The afternoon sermon was given by the Rev. W.F. Rolf, second vice president of the Minnesota District. The organists for the two services were Mrs. Roger Nolop and Mrs. Paul (Elsie) Oehler, the soloist was Weston Schneck, and the senior choir of the Trinity Lutheran Church was directed by Mrs. Weston (Ruth) Schneck.

The new church building was of modern Gothic architecture and had a seating capacity of 365. The structure, measuring 98x38 feet, had a full basement to be used for Sunday School rooms and for the modern kitchen facilities.

Our church, "Trinity Lutheran", is one of the largest churches in the city and the area.

### STATISTICS

*In over 100 years of  
history there have been  
1,182 baptisms,  
1,037 confirmations,  
422 marriages  
and 487 burials.*



**Dedication of the New Church**





An interesting feature of the interior of the church is the roof beam which separates the chancel and the nave, illustrating the thought of entering the chancel through the cross.

Along with the new church structure, it was decided to install a pipe organ. On July 25, 1949, a contract was signed for a four rank Kilgen Organ installed at a total cost of \$7,500. The console was placed in the balcony and the pipes in the nave of the church.

Rev. Ray Holzhauer gave his farewell sermon on April 27, 1952, at 11 o'clock. He accepted a call to the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rose Hill in St. Paul. The Rev. Otto Truog of Wheaton served as vacancy pastor.

In 1951, a stewardship program called "God's Acre" was used for the Building Fund at first and later opened up to the Mission Fund and the General Fund. The plan was very simple — the yield of a certain portion of acreage is pledged to God.

Examples: Mr. John Doe pledges to the Lord for this purpose - one acre of the "far forty". In this field, he has planted corn. In the month of October, Mr. Doe picks that field of corn. It yields 100 bu. per acre. During the entire growing season Mr. Doe has been conscious of his pledge. On Thanksgiving Day, he brings the money which 100 bu. of corn brought him as a token of appreciation. Another person feels he would rather set aside the proceeds from some other project on his farm. Example 2: Joe works as a clerk and has a fixed income. He pledges (let's say) \$1.00 per week - or a certain percent of his income. This amount is a token of appreciation for the good things God has done for us.

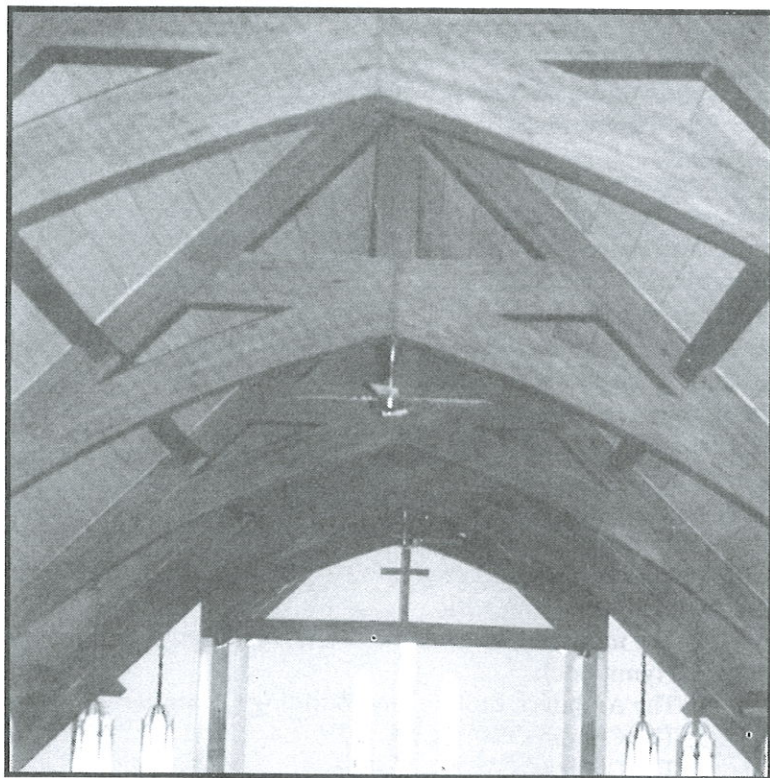
Beginning in January of 1952, the "Conquest for Christ" committee was instructed to do a house to house canvas of the Ortonville area. This was an evangelism outreach program to help find those not knowing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

On November 2, 1952, Rev. Edgar Priess of Leader, Saskatchewan, Canada, was installed as our new pastor.

A mission project called "Corn for Europe" was held in 1955. Farmers brought ear-corn to a central location, where the corn was shelled and then hauled to an elevator for shipment to Detroit where it was processed at Kellogg Co. for

shipment to Europe. This was a community mission project in which all churches in the area could take part. It is believed that three carloads of shelled corn were shipped from here.

Because of the increase in Sunday School enrollment, it was finally decided to build a new parsonage and turn the old parsonage (which was located south of the church) into Sunday School classrooms. In January of 1956, a lot was purchased for \$1.00 in the Skyview Addition with construction starting as soon as weather permitted. The parsonage was completed that year except for some landscaping work to be done the following spring.



Present Day Parsonage - Spring 1995



On October 4, 1958, radio broadcasts on KDIO radio station began and have continued to this day.

Trinity Lutheran Church continued to grow and by the spring of 1960 steps were taken to purchase the Nils and Jalmer Hagevik house for the purpose of more Sunday School classrooms. This property was adjacent to the parsonage lot.

Rev. Priess received and accepted a call to Cody, Wyoming. July 31, 1960, was his last Sunday here at Trinity. Rev. K.M. Mueller from Madison, Minnesota, became our next vacancy pastor.

Once again the call process began and this time God, in his wisdom, sent to us Rev. Edwin Eifert from Garden City, Kansas. Rev. E.W. Eifert was installed on September 18, 1960. During the ten years of his pastorate, several changes in the physical property of the church was accomplished.

In June of 1961, our parking lot was completed. By 1964, a building committee was appointed for the purpose of expanding our educational needs. Along with the building committee, a finance committee was also appointed for the purpose of raising funds for the future building project.

On November 7, 1965, dedication was held for the stained glass windows (in the church proper), a granite altar, sanctuary lamp, sacramental candleholders, cross and bell.

Then in July, 1967, at both services, the congregation witnessed a mortgage burning ceremony for the church and parsonage loans. Additional lots were purchased in November of 1968, directly behind our present day educational building, for the purpose of a larger parking lot.

### Homes Moved to Make Way for New Trinity Building



Ortonville's Trinity Lutheran Church has started construction on a new educational building to be located just south of the present church building. Two homes, which had been used for Sunday School classes on the land where the new structure is being built, were moved last week by Walter Hallock to his land just south of town. In photo above, you see the house-moving project underway. Both houses were moved at the same time, making for quite a sight.

After much research, an appropriate educational building design was presented to the Voter's Assembly and approved. Bids were received and approved for the old parsonage and the Hagevik house, with the houses being moved in the summer of 1969.

Erection of the building began almost immediately. Completion was originally planned for April or May of 1970, but some rather lengthy and unfortunate delays changed our plans. One such delay was a trucker's strike that prevented construction materials being delivered.

Pledges were received that totaled \$145,000. The pledges did not come in as quickly as needed; therefore, \$75,000 was borrowed for the educational building. Total cost of the educational building was approximately \$149,000.

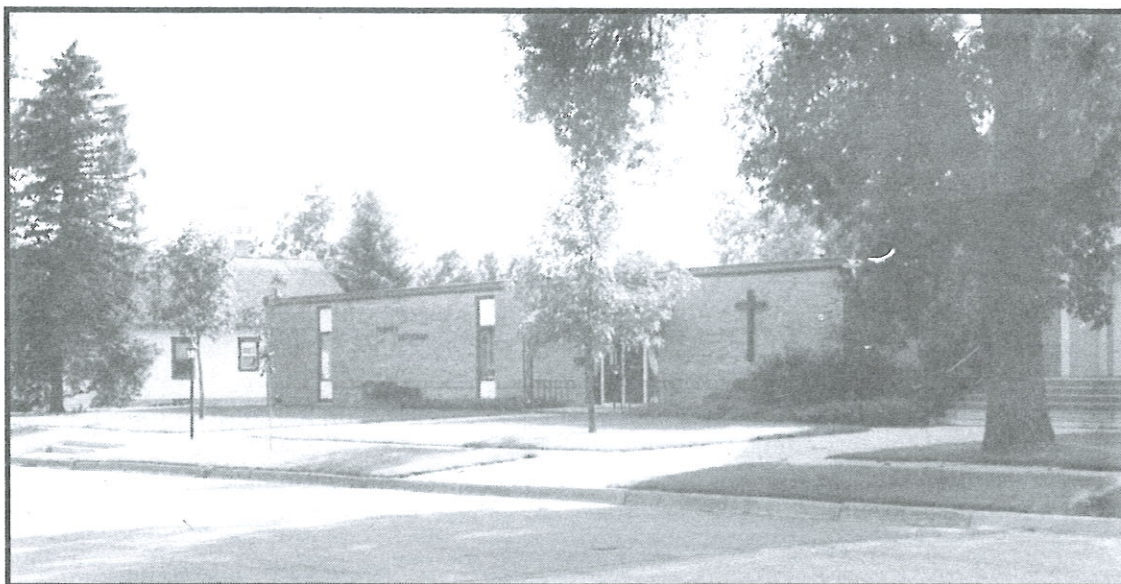
The structure was completed ready for dedication September 27, 1970. Former pastor, Rev. Priess, now of Norborne, Missouri, delivered the dedication sermon, assisted by the Rev. L. F. Mueller of Odessa, Minnesota.



Ground was broken on August 24, 1969, for the education building. To the left, Rev. Eifert turns the first shovel of earth while others look on. Paul Eifert was the acolyte. Above, Art Hillman, Milton Pinkert, Ken Hillman and Willard Bakeberg are leaning on shovels. Also pictured are Donald Holtquist (child-unknown), Bill Thompson and Ervin Thompson.







**The Educational Building — Completed in September 1970**

Rev. Eifert delivered his farewell sermon on November 1, 1970, after accepting a call to St. Michael's in Bloomington, Minnesota. The Rev. LeRoy F. Mueller from Odessa became our new vacancy pastor.

It was with deep humility, the members of the congregation thanked God for His goodness by providing a pastor after an eight month vacancy. Pastor Martin Renner of Coal Valley, Illinois, became "Shepherd of the Flock" on June 27, 1971.

On September 26, 1971, with an estimated 1,200 people in attendance, we gathered together to give thanks and praise to God for blessing this congregation for 75 years. Former Pastor Priess spoke on the theme "Anniversary Reflections and Projections" at the two morning services. Pastor Eifert preached at the 2:30 service on "Purposeful Kingdom Service."

At a special voter's meeting in August of 1973, Pastor Renner resigned his pastorate at Trinity to move his family to southern Florida in order to be in a more favorable climate for his family's health problems of allergies. Pastor Warneke from Madison, Minnesota, filled the vacancy until Rev. George Krueger accepted this calling from his Lord.

Rev. George Krueger was installed on Sunday, February 10, 1974. Pastor Krueger came to us from a dual parish of Our Savior's, Eyota, and Christ Lutheran in Rochester, Minnesota.

In the summer of 1974 the Women of Trinity held a "German Style" supper in conjunction with the city of Ortonville's centennial celebration. Over 950 people were served. This annual supper has continued for 21 years with the name being changed to the Ol' Settlers Supper.

Pastor Krueger commented at the January 1977 annual meeting that our Building Fund debt had been paid off. "Praise the Lord that we were able to accomplish this."

Trinity congregation felt that more time should be spent with the youth of the congregation so we hired our first of two parish workers. Rhonda Ahndt from Benson, Minnesota, became our first and Sharon Schmidt became our second after Miss Ahndt resigned in 1978. Miss Schmidt served only a short time and resigned in 1979.

After discussion about repair work needed to the organ, it was decided at this time to increase the organ from a four rank to a fourteen rank organ. Work was completed with a special dedication service held on May 18, 1980, with Paul Hamann of our congregation being the organist.

In the summer of 1980, the congregation hired a Director of Christian Education (DCE) worker, namely, Leland Jackson, whose responsibility was in the area of youth work and Christian education. Mr. Jackson served in this capacity until the summer of 1982.

Through a cooperative mission program with First English Lutheran Church, Ortonville, we helped sponsor two Vietnamese men, Hai Truong, age 28, and his cousin, Nghiem Van Nguyen, age 39. Housing for a period of two months was furnished by the two congregations, along with numerous gifts given to the two men to help them adjust to life here in the United States. Big Stone Cheese Factory hired the two men so they could become self-sufficient, which they did rather quickly.

Candidate Kevin Froelich was ordained into the ministry on Sunday, June 20, 1982, here at Trinity. He is the first baptized, confirmed member of the church to be ordained here. He accepted a call to Fort Madison, Iowa.

Pastor Krueger worked strongly in the evangelism field with a strong outreach as well as inreach ministry program.



The Evangelism Board developed a group called "Harvest Workers". The Harvest Workers were volunteers who visited people both in the congregation and in the community, encouraging them to join in worshipping God. "Block Watchers" was a program developed, whereby members of the congregation were to inform the Harvest Workers of new people moving into the area or notifying them of people who had not heard of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Krueger bid farewell on Sunday, December 26, 1982. He had accepted a call to St. Paul Lutheran Church in Blue Earth, Minnesota. Rev. Scharff of Morris served as vacancy pastor.

During this vacancy, steel siding, painting, and other minor upkeep projects were completed on the parsonage.

October 9, 1983, Trinity's ninth pastor, the Rev. Donald Johnson from Waconia, Minnesota, was installed.

In the spring of 1988, the congregation hired Chip Laughridge to work in the youth ministry area. Mr. Laughridge came from an organization called "Tentmakers". The Tentmakers was a low budget youth ministry program whereby we hired Chip to work 30-35 hours per week with our youth, yet giving him time to work part-time at another job for him to meet his expenses. This was a two year commitment, both by the congregation and the Tentmaker organization.

The congregation, in May of 1987, praised God for allowing another son of the congregation to become a Shepherd for the Lord, namely, candidate Paul Krueger, who graduated from Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Candidate Krueger was ordained into the ministry on June 20, 1987, at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Onida, South Dakota.

In the spring of 1989, an unusual incident happened, whereby a garbage truck backed into a utility pole, breaking it off which caused a fire and considerable damage to the southwest corner of the educational building. It was decided to have the remainder of the education building walls, that had steel siding, to be covered with brick which would blend in with the rest of the brick work. Air conditioning of the church proper was installed.

Early in 1989, the congregation decided to have another mission project which would be above and beyond their normal mission giving. The program was called "Together in Missions", and Rev. Henry Witte was chosen to be our missionary. Rev. Witte and his family were serving in Venezuela, South America.

In the spring of 1990, Trinity and Immanuel, Shible Township congregations joined in calling a pastor, with emphasis on youth ministry, to serve as an associate pastor here at Trinity and full time pastor at Shible. Candidate Kevin Lentz of Elkhart, Indiana, accepted the call and was ordained into the ministry on July 22, 1990, at Immanuel. Pastor Johnson would have three Sundays a month at Trinity and one Sunday at Immanuel. Pastor Lentz would be just the opposite, with one Sunday at Trinity and three Sundays at Immanuel. Pastor Lentz's main area was to work with the youth here at Trinity.

On October 7, 1990, Pastor Johnson was granted a peaceful release to Sheboygan, Wisconsin. Pastor LeRoy Mueller, who recently retired and had moved back to Ortonville with his wife, Carol, became our next vacancy pastor.

After a fairly long search, the Lord in His wisdom chose Pastor Richard Boehnke of Montana to serve His congregation here at Trinity. Pastor Boehnke was installed on Sunday, January 19, 1992.

A special service of Farewell and Godspeed was held March 15, 1992, for candidate Paul Hamann. Paul was a native of Ortonville and a member of Trinity and had finished his studies for the pastoral ministry at Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Candidate Hamann accepted a call to Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Tucson, Arizona, where he was ordained and installed on Sunday, April 5, 1992.

The pipe organ was found to be in need of a major overhaul. After meeting with pipe organ builders for cost estimates, etc., it was decided to look into electronic organs. After much research, it was decided to purchase an Allen Digital Organ. The new organ was installed in June of 1993 with a special dedication of the new organ and stained glass windows in the narthex and educational building on September 11, 1994.

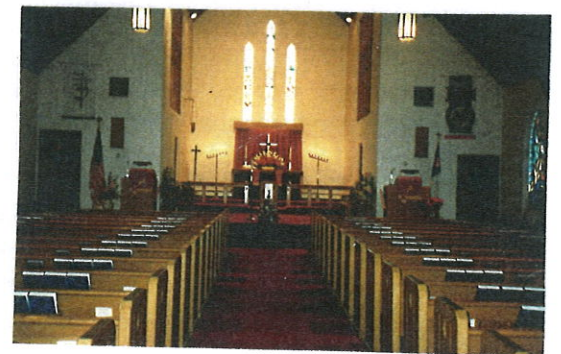
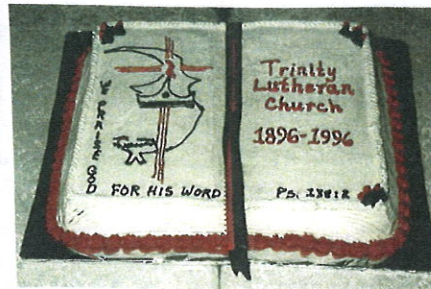
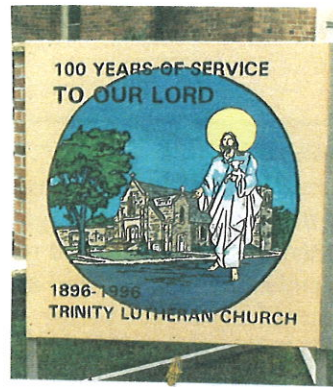
In July of 1993, Pastor Kevin Lentz was given a peaceful release for him to go and serve at "The Grove", Texas. It was later decided not to continue with a shared ministry with Immanuel, Shible Township.

On July 30, 1995, Trinity congregation held special services praising God in allowing Pastor Boehnke to serve Him for 30 years of service.

*While compiling this brief history of our first 100 years as a congregation, not everything that happened has been able to be put into this report. For instance, problems, shortage of Sunday School and confirmation teachers, delinquent members and poor involvement was just as much a problem 100 years ago as it is today. How about the tragedies of life such as: smallpox epidemic, World War's I and II (fighting against some of our own relatives), the great depression, droughts, floods, Korean Conflict, Vietnam War, Desert Storm and the many personal tragedies. Unfortunately, not everything has been acknowledged, nor could it be since not everything was recorded; namely, speaking of memorials given to the glory of God. Some items have been mentioned, but like the widows mite, nothing goes unnoticed in the eyes of God. Our problems have remained the same, only the names of the people dealing with the problems have changed. However, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) As long as we stay true to His Word, He has promised to take care of us.*

TO GOD, GIVE ALL PRAISE AND GLORY.







***Alleluia!!! We praise God for His Word. Alleluia!!!***

We made it to Saturday, August 10, 1996. The big weekend, it came which we had been planning for the last two years. He kept us on task and He brought us here, all of us, to worship and thank our Lord for 100 years of worshipping Him and spreading His Word throughout the land from Trinity Lutheran Church – Ortonville, Mn..The day was beautiful and registration and all the recreational activities were going for all ages. The beautiful Carillons played, the German band entertained the people and then the trumpeters played "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God". Welcomes, introductions, adult Centennial singers filled the air with beautiful music and the children warmed our hearts when their cherub voices rang out. Messages were heard from some of our former Pastors and introductions of so many confirmands, past church workers, Trinity's members were so thankful for everyone that was brought here to celebrate and thank our heavenly Father for all that He has provided for us to get where we were in 1996. Singing from the "Messengers" was awesome but soon the day was closing down, prayers were said the common doxology was sung. Sunday, August 11 came and our festival service started. Pastor Boehnke opened the worship service with former Pastors' Eifert, Priess, Krueger and Johnson all taking part in reminding us that God gave us the ultimate sacrifice for all of us and in ages to come, His Son – Jesus Christ our Lord. What more is there to be said. Our Lord provided us with a meal, a festival meal. We thanked Him for all that He has given us, in ages past to have brought us to His weekend – His festival weekend – worshipping and praising him. Thank you Lord, Almighty. His blessing was given – The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

A special retirement service and brunch was held for Pastor Boehnke August 3, 2003, who had served the Lord for 38 years with 11 of those here at Trinity. Pastor David Boehnke, Pastor's brother will preach the sermon and Pastor Dan Abrahams, Pastor's brother-in-law will be the liturgist. A wonderful day for Pastor Boehnke. Once again a vacancy Pastor was needed and the Lord sent us Pastor Howard Jording and his wife Lucia from Fairmont, N.D., who was a retired Pastor still willing to serve. The Lord sent us the perfect couple, to us as a congregation, it would be a short time but the Lord had other plans. When the proper time came, January, 2005, the calling process began and divine calls were sent out.

By April of 2005, along came a Vicar Raymond Smith with his wife Linda and two children, Jason and Bonnie Joy who were sent to serve us with Pastor McManus of Benson, serving as mentor for Vicar Smith. This all happened in July of 2005. Once again, we wished Pastor Howard Jording and wife, Lucia good-bye but they were not forgotten. In March of 2006, we placed a call to the seminary to specify candidate Smith to become our full time Pastor and this was granted. On June 20, 2006 Vicar Smith was ordained into the ministry and became our Pastor. Linda Smith, who has DCE credentials, was given a call in Sept. to serve as a part-time deaconess with emphasis on youth education which she duly accepted.

Dedication of new hymnals was on Sept. 16, 2007. A few of the members of the congregation were asking that they needed help to get down to the basement for bible study on Sunday mornings. They were wondering if there was anything that we could do to make it easier for them and anybody to get to the basement on their own. Before we knew it, a few people were doing some measuring and just talking, what if we could move the footage that we have downstairs for kitchen/fellowship hall, upstairs. Sounds silly, but in checking, it was realized that we could do that. We still would have enough Sunday school rooms and the basement could be utilized for quilting, making banners, etc..

It was brought up at a Voter's meeting and the trustees were asked if they could start doing some serious measuring and finding out cost. Information was brought back to a Voter's meeting and finally a motion was made, seconded and further discussion, more questions were brought up and the motion passed that we remodel part of the education wing into a catering kitchen and fellowship hall, but still have enough Sunday school rooms for teaching. Before we knew it, work began.

May 4, 2008, we were having a dedication of the new Fellowship Hall and all was well. The quilters made wise use of the empty basement and expanded their area making quilts of all sizes. They were having fun and more women came out to help, as there was more room and things could be left out til the next week for quilting. At the same time, the Worrall property came up for sale. With the Lord's help again, the congregation stepped up to the plate and made this happen. **Alleluia!!!**



A special voter's meeting in July of 2010 granted a peaceful release to Pastor Raymond Smith who resigned as Pastor at Trinity. In August of that same year, the voter's assembly met and call was sent to Vicar Peter Gueldner to be our next vacancy pastor of which he duly accepted.

In the spring 2011, Trinity received a call from the placement director of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne informing us that Vicar Gueldner was given a placement to his own church where he would be ordained and become a Pastor of his own congregation. His last day here at Trinity will be May 22, 2011. We, the congregation, graciously accepted a memorial gift of new padded chairs for the fellowship hall. We have been blest again. Since we were still in the calling process and needed a vacancy Pastor-Pastor Robert Frederick, a retired pastor from Town Walter, Bellingham accepted with open arms. He and his wife, Irene lived in Willmar, Mn.. Driving was not a problem for him; he was doing the Lord's work.

We continued the divine call process and in early winter of 2012 Pastor Dennis O'Neill and his wife Janet accepted our call and was installed in February of that year and are still serving as our shepherd at the present time. The Evangelism board did a coat drive. The community was asked for any good used coats and to their amazement, they were able to hand out 230 coats along with mittens, hats and snow pants. What clothing was left, it was given to the coat exchange in Lac Qui Parle County and Orphan Grain Train. Great job!

August of 2016, one of our sons of Trinity, John Henry Koopman, was ordained into the ministry in Emmetsburg, Iowa, where he was to serve his first call. Thanks be to God.

May of 2017, we upgraded our speaker system in the fellowship hall.

Additional new signage was granted in 2018 on the west side of the church as a memorial from the Robert Meyer families in memory of Brenda.

A boulevard sign was added as a memorial for LaValle Berkner from Bev and his family in 2020.

Year 2020 is here, how fast time goes by. Things are happening, installing of new officers, bible studies, Sunday school continues and looking at date for confirmation, the recognition Sunday for confirmands and graduates, weddings, and more. Then in March of 2020, Covid-19 came barreling down the aisle. No one could have ever predicted how our lives would change, not always for the betterment. Life continues around us, so marriages, births, deaths continue and our Lord gives everyone strength to persevere. Thank you Lord.





2020 began like every year, a cold winter, snow on the ground another normal Minnesota winter. March came in like a lamb and left like a lamb; however, Covid-19 came along and left an imprint that no one who lived at this time will ever forget. In Martin Luther's time, the black plague was a deadly virus/disease that was going through Europe that hindered worshipers from attending church services. Covid-19 was our modern day black plague. Our last indoor service was March 29, 2020. Governors from different states handled the pandemic in different ways to try and keep their residents safe from this new deadly virus. Governor Walz, of Minnesota, closed all non-essential businesses for two months, schools were closed and along with it all churches were forced to close also. This all happened the week of Holy week services, so no traditional Palm Sunday service or Easter Services were held and "satan was having a good time". It is assumed this was the first time in 124 years that Trinity Lutheran Church did not have the traditional holy week within God's house with worshippers. Unknowingly at the time, God in His wisdom had a plan for us.

We were closed for approximately four (4) months before we were able to come back inside the church proper to worship as a Christian family again. It seemed that satan was having a "heyday" in trying to stop any type of Christian education and worship services. God's people had other plans for him. First of all, we have had radio broadcasts that have been serving the community for many years, along with video recordings that was played on a local community television station. Members of the congregation who were given the gift of modern technology stepped forward and were able to place Sunday services on face book. The only people in the church though, were Pastor O'Neill, who was preaching to an almost empty church, but ... there were the people who had to run the sound and recording equipment; satan had not completely won. God's word was still being preached via face book; Christ's worshipers could still hear the good news from the comfort of their homes. Pastor also began a daily devotion 5 days a week from his home through the use of face book. Trinity's parishioners had access to church services in many different ways and times. Pastor and the elders decided it was time to also start having communion but in a different way. The wine and wafer were in one container, which had been already used by other churches throughout the land, but not us. As Pastor spoke the words of the sacrament -"Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me", we, the congregation took the bread. In the same way, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me", we, the congregation drank the wine/juice. It was a special moment to be able to ask for forgiveness and receive His body and blood once again in our church, if only by sitting in our pews and receiving the sacrament. Pastor also offered Holy Communion to members, who drove to the church and received the sacrament via their car window, but you had to set this up in advance; but for some this was ideal. Over time, we were able to sing, but only while wearing facemasks. We wondered if this was going to be our "norm" of being able to worship.

Funerals were held quite differently, as some were postponed indefinitely; some had just graveside services for just the immediate families of our parishioners and others had open graveside services with a postponed indoor memorial service at a later date. This was a very hard decision to make along with grieving the loss of your loved one. Jesus Christ carried everyone through this difficult time.

God has blessed Trinity with so many people from the very beginning in 1896 to the present day in using their talents to overcome obstacles that have been placed in our way by satan. Members of the congregation who were given the talent of dealing with modern technology, began improving and adding to the outreach ability by making services available through a live feed program over the internet. Now we had one more tool for outreach --- radio, public television, face book and live services. Evangelism is alive and thriving. Amen!

Trinity decided to have parking lot worship services starting June 28, 2020 at 9:00 A.M.; whereby; anyone could come to Trinity's parking lot; turn your car radio to the 83.5 FM station and participate in worshipping our Lord this way; even communion.

**"Jesus Christ is the same...yesterday...today...tomorrow...forever!" Hebrews 13:8**

This was our theme for our outdoor services, He does not change, we do; but Jesus Christ is always there for us and will never leave us or forsake us, ever! Alleluia.

As more restrictions were eased up, we moved back into the church proper on July 26, 2020 wearing masks, social distancing (6 feet apart), using hand sanitizers but no singing; but we were at 50% capacity. No hymnals, attendance



registrar or pencils were in the pews. We only used every other pew, as the pews were taped off in accordance of the 6 foot distance. It was hard not to sing, as we wanted to raise our voices from the rafters to our Lord and let the world know we are alive and praising our heavenly Father, for all that He has done for us. After a month or so, singing was allowed with masks on, still distancing ourselves though. We all needed to adjust to the changes so that we could have a God-pleasing (and safe) worship service. It was definitely different and who would think that we would be doing this, here in Ortonville, Minnesota. Thus giving the faithful more opportunities to worship. We spoke the words of our hymns but over time; we were able to sing, but only while maintaining social distancing. Sunday school staff was able to have their traditional Sunday school classes following church services each Sunday, by using their talents to work a program that was complete with the safety rules implemented by the government. We were one of a very few churches here in town that had classes for our children, so that they would continue to know that Jesus was their friend, each and every day of the pandemic. Jesus said – “let the little children come unto me” and we did!

Confirmation classes were held virtual and using social distancing when in person. Our Sunday school staff also used their talents and the most remarkable outcome was that the staff had our traditional Christmas Children’s Service. This was while working around all the government restrictions. The Christmas story of Jesus’ birth was told!!! It was exciting for the children, the parents, families and we, as Trinity Lutheran Church parishioners to witness this event, even while socially distancing ourselves. We even found a way to have services watched in our reception hall via TV to cover ourselves with the overflow. Our Lord provided by using every talent that He could give us to use and conquer satan. Now in June of 2021, we are almost back to “normal”, singing is allowed without masks and social distancing requirements have been lifted. Hymnals and attendance register with pencils are back in the pews and being used continuously. It is nice to be able to hold our hymnals in our hands, turn pages and give glory to our King. We still are taking the sacrament of communion, the new way; but we are still able to ask for forgiveness and receive Jesus’ body and blood.

What is in store for us as parishioners here at Trinity Lutheran Church in the future -- is unknown, but that has always been the case. Some in our congregation did get Covid-19 but our faith in our heavenly Father did prevail! He is the only one that knows what the future holds for us. Three vaccines have been developed and are being given per your decision. We know that our heavenly Father will sustain us, lift us up and keeps us in the palm of His hand every second of every minute of every hour of every day. With Him, as one door closes, another shall open. He will provide and we as believers need to continuously remind ourselves of that, as we are sinners in a sinful world, but by faith in His Word and sacraments, we will be saved. Amen. Alleluia!!!

**Faith without fear.** We have Christ on our side, we are in the Lord’s house, His house, and we are His! Even as sinners, we need to ask and pray without ceasing to our Lord, Jesus Christ daily. He is the ultimate decision maker. Relinquish yourself unto Him, follow His ways and satan will have no foothold here. Let us celebrate our 125th Anniversary here at Trinity Lutheran Church of Ortonville, Minnesota. God is Good!

